

# EASTER IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS--By LIEUT. PEARY.

Continued from Page 12.

These natives all gather about the entrance to the chapel until the Governor and Assistant Governor and the doctor and their families have entered, then they, too, enter, and seat themselves in the old-fashioned way, the women on one side of the aisle and the men on the other.

Were it not for the color and suggestion of life afforded by the tasteful decorations of evergreens and flowers, the interior of the little chapel would be almost as barren as the bleak, snow-covered rocks on the outside. Enclosed with a rough sheathing; a pulpit of material and workmanship scarcely less rough; the floor bare; the seats rough plank benches; the furnishings and the decorations of the church are concentrated in the little cabinet organ and the ornaments of the altar, comprising a religious painting, two gilt candlesticks, a small crucifix, and pendant from the ceiling one of those tinkling glass chandeliers, such as are to be seen in old-time mansions here.

The pastor of this church is a regularly ordained Eskimo pastor. His education finished in Copenhagen, he has returned to live his life out in charge of the pastorate of this Arctic island. I met him first in 1886 at Godhaven, where I was stopping for a week or two before going into the interior. Pastor Morch had just returned from Denmark then, and called upon me in my pleasant room in the Governor's house. Intelligent and well read I found him, speaking English and Danish, besides his native tongue, yet the native blood was strong within him, and his eyes lingered so persistently upon two or three pieces of pilot bread which I had laid out on a table to take with me on a tramp up the cliffs that I asked if I might offer him some. They were accepted with the eagerness of a child receiving candy, and when I poured a generous glass of mellow, amber "rye" and pushed it across the table to help wash them down, my visitor became my everlasting friend and well-wisher.

The services are conducted after the Lutheran form, and last about an hour and a half. The singing is a feature. The Eskimos as a rule have sweet voices, and the negro ear for melody and time. As the congregation issues from the little chapel it is near meridian. The low Arctic sun is in the south; the wind from the east, off the ice cap, so that the upper atmosphere is laden with impalpable snowdust from the great frozen Sahara of the interior, and one Easter Sunday is now lit with the splendor, the glory, the dazzling colors of a "sun dog" or parhelia, a phenomenon which is nowhere to be seen in such brilliancy as in the Arctic regions.

Around the god of day sweep two concentric rings of rainbow colored light, with a third inverted resting upon the top of one of the others. Set in the inner of these circles, directly over the sun and on either side, are three faint images of itself, the "sun dogs." A brilliant corona of yellow light surrounds the sun and makes its outlines indistinct. From this corona a triangular tongue of yellow light reaches upward until its point touches the upper "sun dog." Two paler bands of light stretch horizontally from the sun to a point beyond the flanking "sun dogs," and far around to the west, over the mass surface of the Arctic Sea, is a faint blotch of light, a pale, colorless, frozen sun. After the service all the natives gather about the Assistant Governor's house, and after giving three cheers for him, sing several songs. They are then invited to come in, and coffee and cakes are passed around, and for an hour or two they have just such a time as we have here at an afternoon tea where every one knows every one else. Entering this house, a rectangular hall leads to a large square room with bare floor,

and its only furnishing a billiard table and a few chairs. A door opposite is open, and through it is seen a cozy room, with rugs on the floor, bright curtains at the windows and the window sills gay with pots of hardy blooming plants. The tops of the deep casemented windows are even with the low ceiling, and the yellow flooding sunlight fills every nook and corner of the room. Photographs, etchings and paintings hang upon the walls. One side of the room is occupied by an old-fashioned mahogany sideboard, filled with glass and china and a few pieces of old silver. In a corner by the window stands a writing table with a huge round chair pushed in front of it.

Opposite the bookcase is an old-time sofa, almost hidden by large downy pillows, and just in front of this sofa, as is the fashion here, stands a round table, upon which are placed the refreshments for the occasion.

Now they laugh and chatter, criticize and admire each other's costumes, for every one has tried to have a new outfit and has kept its colors a secret.

It is hard to say how long this company would remain were it not that the chapel bell once more calls them to service.

At the close of this service they all go to the Governor's house and proceed to serenade him, knowing full well that he, too, will invite them in. Here not only do they have coffee and cake "ad lib," but the Governor throws open one of his rooms, five or six Eskimo men seize their fiddles, and in a few moments a lively dance is in full swing.

Their dancing is a great surprise to a stranger, for they dance beautifully, especially the women. With their small feet they keep perfect time, and as they have no skirts to hide their feet or impede their agile movements, one cannot fail to notice how gracefully they glide over the floor in the waltz.

The children leave the dance when they find there is no more coffee and cake, and are soon snow-balling and coasting. Their elders, however, keep up the dancing until 9 o'clock, when the pastor dismisses them with his blessing.

But even at this hour it is still daylight, for the Arctic twilight is almost as long as the Arctic day itself. But slowly the light wanes, and one by one the great northern constellations Cassiopeia, Orion, the Great Bear, Gemini, and those sparkling brilliants of the Arctic night, Arcturus, Aldebaran, Vega and the rest, come forth as for a few hours the rapidly contracting shadow of the "Great Night" folds the Arctic world in its sable mantle, only to have it rent and slashed by the flashing blades of the Aurora, darting rapier-like athwart the blue black sky, then rushing together to form a blazing arch spanning the heavens and bristling with points, which leap and flash like the uplifted sabres of charging cavalry. Then arch and sabres melt and fade into a faint, luminous cloud.

As the ghostly undulations sweep along the curtains' edge pale flashes of red and green spring out, and, standing in the utter silence of the frozen night, one almost fancies that he hears the rustle of the mighty folds, shaping itself to the sounds, "Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison."

R. L. Peary, U.S.N.



AN ESKIMO WEDDING

ON EASTER SUNDAY--REPRODUCED FROM A PHOTOGRAPH

TAKEN BY LIEUT. PEARY.

## MRS. FREMONT'S HAPPY THOUGHT.

The Wife of the Distinguished General Started the Custom of Easter Flowers in Church.

Snow, even in Winter, was not common in Washington. But here was Easter--a late Easter, too, and in place of our warm Spring weather a whirling, drifting, continuous snowstorm. We were to have dined Easter Monday with Mr. Gales, the pleasant, homely, English editor of the National Intelligencer, and his handsome, stately wife, a cousin of General Robert Lee, at their country house, just out of town. But early on Sunday morning a man on horseback was sent around to the invited guests to tell them of the necessary postponement, as wheels could not turn in the cloggy snow, and the drifts were many and risky. Mr. Gales published the answer from Mr. Webster to show, he said, how the touch of genius lifted even the common place of "the weather," for Mr. Webster, in making his regrets, said how variable were our seasons; that at the battle of Lexington it was recorded "that the heat was so great, men's tongues lolled from their mouths," while here, so far south--the same historic 19th of April--were snowdrifts stopping intercourse.

The rector of our church, the Epiphany, was a man by nature open to all gracious and lovely ideas. He had given his consent to a wish of mine which was an innovation in church matters. The 19th of April was a birthday I always kept, and the birthday had chanced to fall on an Easter. And so Mr. French, with some doubts for the effect on others, permitted me to decorate the font with flowers.

The old Church of the Epiphany was a bare, plain building, without stained glass or any adornments, and its many clear-glass windows gave full view of the thick falling snow, though the large church was warm within. Fancy the surprise--and to many the pleasure--of finding this warm atmosphere perfumed by a mass of roses and heliotrope and Parma violets, and the fragrant rose geranium. People came in, hurrying from the raw outer air, then slowed up and sniffed like hounds on a trail, until the soft "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" and pleased faces of women, guided their eyes to my modest Easter offering. It was evident that the idea took kindly.

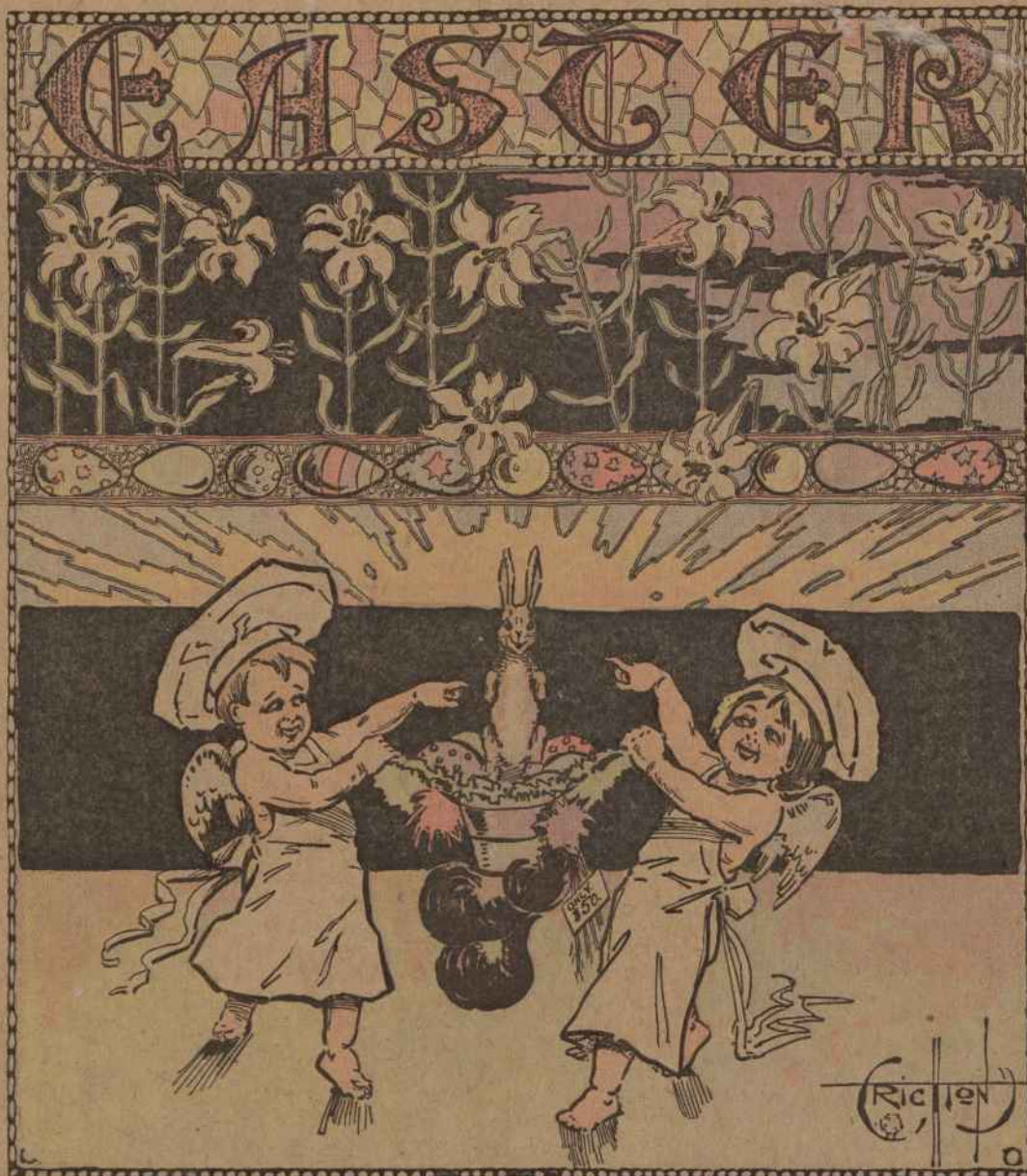
Two pews immediately in front of mine were occupied by Lieutenant Gillis, a naval officer in charge of the National Observatory, with a large family of young children who sometimes overflowed into mine, where there was but the one child. A beckoning gesture brought over a young girl just old enough to resent being put in "the children's pew." She was a nice young thing, with the exquisite white-and-pink complexion belonging with the red hair which they all had. In the way young girls do, she idealized me, and this Sunday good seed fell on good ground, and in time brought fruit a hundredfold. She had watched my arranging the flowers, and now sat by me, serenely happy, with a rose for herself as pink as her own pretty cheeks.

The Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, had the pew just back of mine. This was in 1853.

In 1862, when Mr. Davis was not sharing my pew, my little, red-haired friend had grown into a splendid young woman, with all the happy audacity of youth and beauty and innocent girlish will. She was in New York, and, together with other young people, they were dressing the altar at old Trinity Church. It was too English in its atmosphere to omit the traditional "greens," but this wilful young person meant more and better than that. She quoted me and the first church she had seen decorated with flowers for Easter, and produced the supply of greenhouse flowers she had brought. The discussion was hot and ran into the night. But it was the time of new ideas, and the Easter sun rose on the altar rails in their time-honored green, while the font and reading desk were beautiful and sweet with white roses, azaleas and violets. "No backward step" has ever been taken.

I think it soon would have become a welcomed usage anyway, for the more modern feeling for religion is, not to set it apart and disconnect it from happiness, but to rely on it at all times, whether in sorrow or gladness, for its strength and peace and hope; but as its symbol of gladness--so far as I know--it is quite the first decoration with flowers at Easter in our Protestant churches, and with conservative old Trinity leading the way, it is now a beautiful and fixed observance.

JESSIE BENTON FREMONT.



Wake! wake! Again 'tis Easter morn,  
And folly winds her laughing horn,  
Begone the sackcloth's sombre gray,  
And brush the ashes' dust away,  
For doleful Lent is o'er!

And, as the lily lifts its head,  
And butterflies their gay wings spread,  
In gown and bonnet all arrayed,  
Come forth, O glorious Easter maid,  
And life will smile once more!

## DR. TALMAGE ON EASTER FLOWERS.

The Famous Pastor See Strong and True Religious Symbolism in Them.

Fourteen times in the Bible is the lily mentioned--only twice the rose. Caesar had his throne on the hills. The lily had her throne in the valley. In the greatest sermon that was ever preached there was only one flower, and that a lily. The Bedford dreamer, John Bunyan, entered the House of the Interpreter and was shown a cluster of flowers, and was told to "consider the lilies." I take the lily as typical of all flowers, and Easter gaid, landed with all the opulence of floral beauty seemed to address us, saying: "Consider the lilies, consider the azaleas, consider the fuchsias, consider the oleanders."

The flowers are the angels of the grass. Martin Luther always had a flower on his desk for inspiration. Through the cracks of the prison floor a flower grew up to cheer Piccola. Mungo Park, the great traveller and explorer, sank down in the desert to die, but, seeing a flower near by, he got up with new courage and travelled on to safety.

What are flowers good for? They are good for the bridal day. So much of the pathway of life is covered up with thorns, we ought to cover the beginning with orange blossoms.

They are good to honor and comfort the obsequies; the worst gash ever made into the side of the earth is the gash of the grave. There needs something to cover it up--flowers for the casket, for the hearse, for the cemetery.

What are flowers good for? For religious symbolism. The Bible is an arboretum, a divine conservatory. To illustrate the brevity of the brightest human life you will quote from Job: "A man cometh forth as a flower and is cut down."

Flowers have no grander use than when, on Easter morning, we celebrate the reanimation of Christ from the catacombs. And so I twist all the festal flowers of all the churches of America with all the festal flowers of chapels and cathedrals of all Christendom into one great chain, and with that chain I bind the Easter mornings of our lives with the closing Easter of the world's history--of the Resurrection.

T. DE WITT TALMAGE.

## OLGA NETHERSOLE'S EASTER MEMORY.

A Pretty Scene that Impressed Her as Being Like a Sign From Heaven.

There is one memory of my childhood associated with Easter that can never be eliminated. I was very young at the time, but every detail of the incident is as firmly impressed upon my mind as though it had happened only yesterday.

A member of my family lay sick at home, and all were worn with anxiety and dread. During the week preceding Easter the skies had been dark and the weather was raw and bleak, gusts of snow falling from time to time, and everything seemed to be in keeping with the darkness that had come over our house. The physician attending my relative had called many times, and each time, as I watched from my nursery window, I thought his face grew graver. In spite of it all, as the days slowly wore on and the time grew nearer to Easter, I was too young not to feel the excitement of the prospect of church on Easter morning.

The day was beautiful. The sun shone hot and bright. My governess was particularly quiet about the invalid, though she told me he was worse. We went sadly enough to church--she and I and my sister, and my brother was among the little, white-surplised choristers in the chancel.

The full, rich notes of the organ were pealing forth the opening of "Christ is Risen To-day," as my relative's mother stole softly down the aisle and seated herself by us. While she knelt there praying, the sun streamed on to her head and seemed to fill her soul with a strange light. She did not stay until the end of the service, for she had to return to her post.

After the service we hurried home, when we learned that a change had come while the mother was in church, and that her child was saved. I do not think I shall ever be happier than I was that Easter day.

OLGA NETHERSOLE.